



The New EU Commission's Climate Drive: What does it mean for member countries? - Research Tour for Journalists

Event

[Visitors Program](#)

Date

2 - 4 December 2019

Location

Brussels, Belgium

In December 2019, a new European Commission took office in Brussels, and president Ursula von der Leyen has pledged to put climate policy at the center for the next five years. But how ambitious are the Commission's plans? What is the business sector's take on the new climate drive? How do international climate experts assess the plans? And how will EU decisions shape national energy, mobility and climate debates and actions in the member states? This research tour for journalists from 2 to 4 December 2019 to Brussels, jointly organised with Clean Energy Wire (CLEW) and the European Climate Foundation (ECF) offered an introduction to relevant institutions, actors and topics that equipped participants with background and contacts to cover EU climate, energy and transport policy.

20 Journalists from France, Germany, Italy and Poland took part in the tour and were given the opportunity to gain essential background on EU climate, energy and transport policy making and thus to cover topics of relevance to national policies from their home countries.

The following meetings and discussions took place:

- EU Commission with representatives of the Directorate General Regional and Urban Policy, Directorate General Energy and Directorate General Climate Action – these three sessions presented different aspects of EU policy, starting with a session on the general EU framework. Specifically, the group heard and discussed about various aspects of the EU's energy and climate policy from the Commission's perspective.
- European Climate Foundation – Linda Kalcher, Director EU Institutional Relations and Linda McAvan, Executive Director for European Relation are two experts with direct experience of previously working in the EU Parliament (EP). They explained the Parliament's formal role and inner workings, including through examples of actual legislation, providing background for the upcoming meetings at the EP.
- Automotive industry – this off the record meeting gave voice to a corporate view on EU policy, focusing on the future of transportation under stringent climate policy.
- European Federation for Transport & Environment (T&E) – this meeting with Carlos Calvo Ambel, Director, Trends and Analysis and Eoin Bannon, Media Manager, added the civil society perspective on the future of mobility in a climate neutral EU.
- European Parliament – the morning of the second tour day gave an inside and on-site

perspective on the workings of the European Parliament, first through a press breakfast with Bas Eickhout, leader of the COP25 delegation of the European Parliament and Philippe Lamberts, President of the Greens/EFA group. The press conference presented the new Climate Law of the Greens/EFA group and talked about solutions for the climate emergency.

- Secondly, direct interactions on climate and energy policy with MEP Peter Liese (Germany), Group of the European People's Party (EPP) and with MEP Jutta Paulus (Germany) and Alexandra Rosenfield Phillips (UK) from the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance took place.
- Climate Action Network Europe (CAN-Europe) – in order to complement the institutional perspective on EU climate policy priorities, the group met for a lunch discussion with the Director Wendel Trio. CAN-Europe is the umbrella organisation for NGOs working on this topic around Europe. The talk also addressed how and why national civil society groups coordinate across the EU, and what problems they face.
- Eurogas: This meeting provided a business perspective on the future energy system in the context of climate neutrality by 2050, focusing on the role of gas – and policy actions needed under the new Commission. The group met and discussed with James Watson, Secretary General, and with Marina Demidova, Communications Advisor of Eurogas.
- E3G: Having heard the industry view on the role of gas in the future, Elisa Gianelli, Researcher at E3G provided a critical reflection on the same topic – and showcased the work of an independent Brussels based think tank with the mission E3G is an independent climate change think tank operating to accelerate the global transition to a low carbon economy.
- Laurence Tubiana, CEO, European Climate Foundation (via video link) – the research tour ended with a discussion on the future vision needed for Europe and the planet, stressing the need for an international perspective on a climate neutral Europe.

In addition to the expert meetings, participants had the opportunity to meet Brussels based journalists during a networking dinner in the evening of 3 December 2019.

The program was sponsored by the European Climate Foundation and organized by Ecologic Institute in close cooperation with Clean Energy Wire and the ECF.

Funding

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